8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RHl Caucasia RHl

event in every Lesghian's life, for if these gifts are accepted, the consent of the parents of the girl is considered final.[24]

The next step consists mainly in an exchange of gifts.

Some days later, the mother of the young man visits the girl's family, bringing with her four loaves of bread and a ram,[25] a large copper basin, clothing, one silver and one golden ring. On accepting the gifts the girl puts the rings on her fingers. This visit of the mother of the groom constitutes the essential part of the engagement: from this moment the two young people are considered engaged.[26] In return the bride's family give the future groom's mother two loaves of bread, a slaughtered ram, and some small coins.

In the near future the fiancée must pay a visit to her parents-in-law. The groom-to-be, however, must absent himself on this occasion. She again receives various gifts: cloth, rings, ear-rings, and a vessel.[27]

Several days later the young man, in turn, pays a visit to his fiancée's family. Now it is the girl's turn to be absent. A small feast is prepared, and the suitor presents the family with some cloth and a slaughtered ram.[28]

The exchange of gifts must continue, vessels, cloth, rams, money, and pastries being the usual gifts. The suitor generally selects holydays as most appropriate for his visits and bestowals. There is especially the *khinki arkhul* which consists of pastries, cloth, an eviscerated ram, six large loaves of bread, and a large cast-iron vessel not less than 16 pounds in weight. These gifts are brought to the fiancée by two male and two female relatives of the suitor. In return the girl sends her future husband some silk cloth and two belts, and a necklace for his sister.[29]

Some time before the wedding, various materials are brought to the future bride, such as hemp, which she must prepare for use in her future home. Two or three years later, she receives 30 or 40 sheep-skins or 9—10 rams. In return she offers some cloth and belts.

The final bestowal of engagement gifts takes place several months later when two men and two women betake themselves to the bride-to-be, this time with one live and one slaughtered sheep, six large loaves of bread, three pieces of clothing of which one is silk, and, finally, a piece of cloth.

The last act of the engagement drama takes place shortly before the wedding. Three to ten relatives of the future bridegroom go to the family of the young lady, where they prepare the *khalba* and for this purpose they bring six pounds of butter and one measure of flour, while the girl's relatives provide other food. This feast is held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays and usually lasts a day or two. On this occasion two reliable persons representing

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[24] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, pp. 181 *f.*

[25] In Upper Kaitago (in Gank, Gansh, Myura) the groom's sister may come instead of his mother. AJuDO, p. 41.

[26] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 182: "Rěšajuščim aktom v dělě svatovstva javljaetsja vstuplenie materi ženicha v dom roditelej nevěsty s četyr'mja bol'šimi chlebami..."

[27] *ibid.*

[28] In some places the suitor's visit precedes that of the fiancée. Cf. "Adaty Južno-Dagestanskich Obščestv," p. 41.

[29] Kovalevskij, *l. c.*